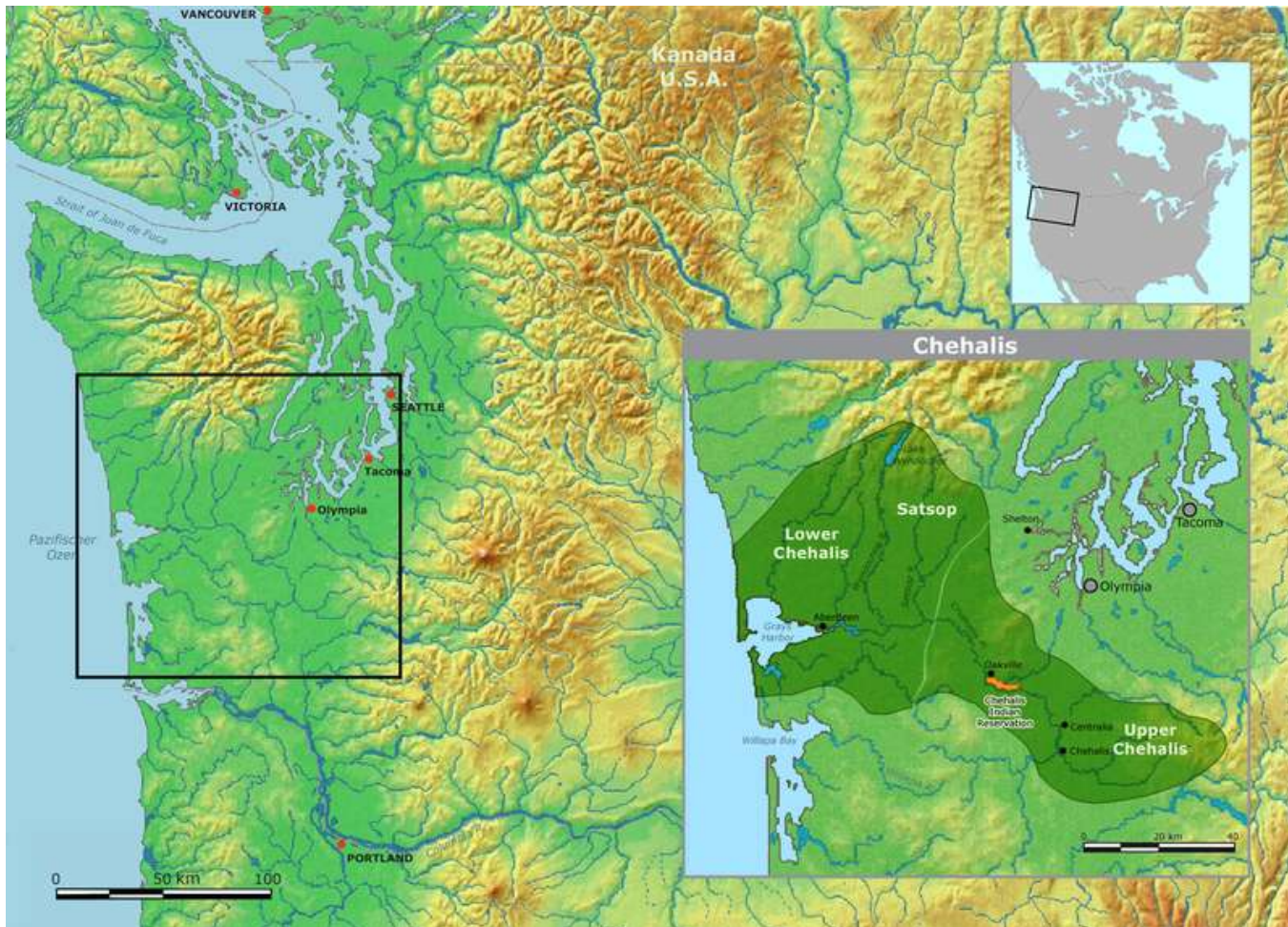# Mapping Indigenous Language Education in Washington State:
attitudes, goals and support

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Washington State

MAP: Own work by Nikater, submitted to the public domain. Background map courtesy of Demis, www.demis.nl

1. Introduction

This presentation presents a study on:

1. What indigenous languages are taught in Washington state public schools

2. What factors may influence the likelihood of a program existing

3. How public education revitalization efforts might be better supported through collaboration

Tulalip family in ceremonial dress pose in Volunteer Park, Seattle, Washington, 1938 http://content.lib.washington.edu/u?/loc,1481

2. Background: Indigenous languages and Washington state

- Late 18th century

- 24 languages
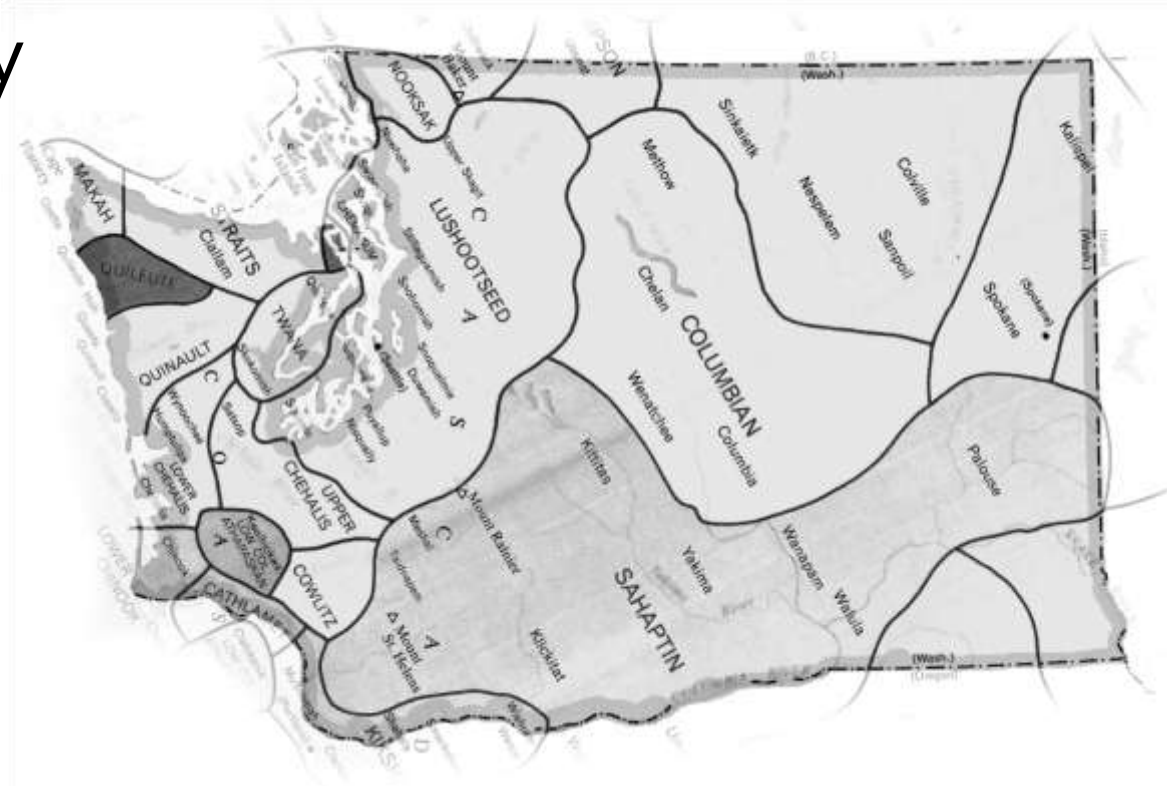
Gunther, Erna (1972). *Indian life on the Northwest coast of North America, as seen by the early explorers and fur traders during the last decades of the eighteenth century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Suttles, Cameron, & Suttles, Wayne P. (Cartographer). (1985). *Native languages of the Northwest Coast*.

2. Current efforts to learn what languages are being taught in Washington state

MELL WA

The Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning
in Washington State Project

WA OSPI

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of Washington

2. MELL WA Map

2009 Map of counties with high schools that reported offering a "Native American" language. (Created by MELLWA)

2. WA Educational demographics

Nez Perce Chief Joseph on horseback, Colville Indian Reservation, Washington, 1903 http://content-dev.lib.washington.edu/u?/loc,1942

- 295 school districts
- 2339 schools

- Per-school mean of total student populations: **3.36**/143 are indigenous students
    - (approximately **2%** of the average total student population)
- (OSPI, 2009a, 2009b, 2010)

2. Recent legislation promoting indigenous language and culture

- ## 2003: WAC 181-78A-700
  - Created indigenous language teacher certification program

- ## 2005: HB 1495 - 2005-2006
  - Teaching of indigenous (tribal) history in public schools

- ## 2007: Senate Bill 5269
  - Loosened restrictions on teacher certification
  - Granted indigenous language equal credit value for college entrance

3. Rationale for this study

- Acquire a more complete picture on indigenous language instruction in Washington State
  - Add sociolinguistic perspectives

- Provide Information that may be helpful to educators, policy makers and activists.
  - Facilitate collaboration
  - Highlight needs and successes
  - Motivate expansion of existing programs and creation of new programs

3. Methodology

What

- Online questionnaire (Catalyst WebQ)
- 41 questions

Who

- 153 schools
  - Only schools which had at least 30 students who were identified as Native American/Indigenous American
- At least one representative from each school was contacted (258 total emails)

3. Results

- 40 respondents completed the questionnaire
  - Response rate of roughly 15%.

3. Results

- 17 schools were reported as offering an indigenous language
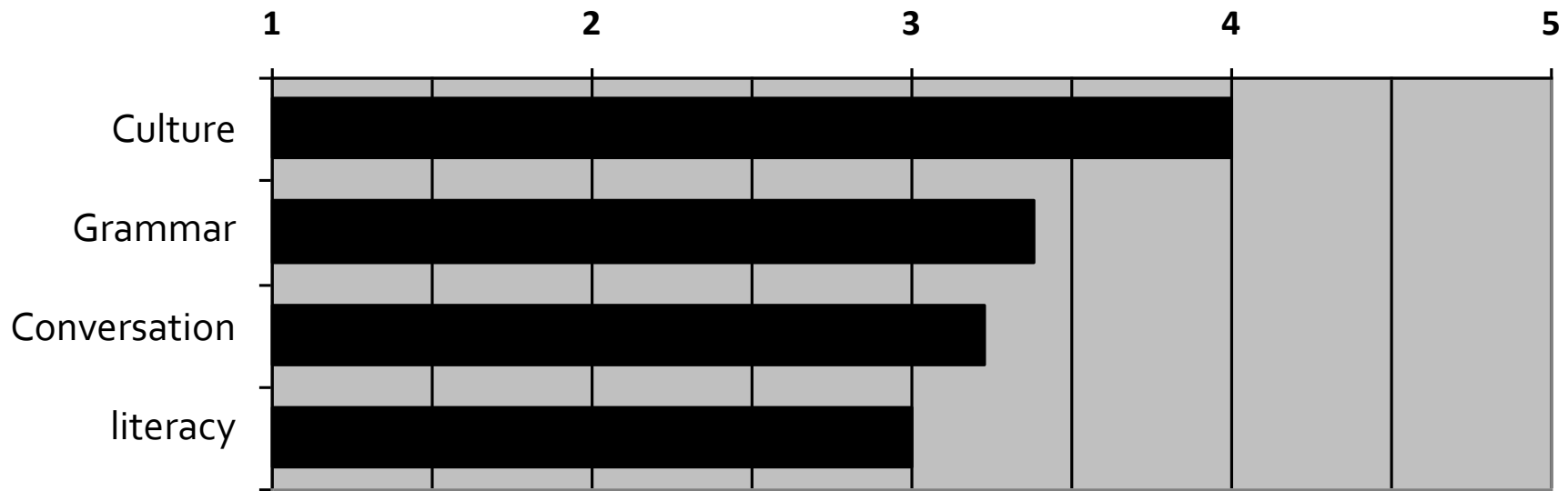
- The average length of program existence was 14 years

3. Languages reported as being currently offered

- Makah
- Quileute
- Yakama/Yakima (Sahaptin)
- Lushootseed
- Klallam (Straits Salish)
- Southern Okanogan
- "Salish"

3. Emphasis placed on teaching certain areas

1 = no *emphasis* | 5 = *strong emphasis*

	1	2	3	4	5
Culture					
Grammar					
Conversation					
literacy					

(N=13)   means

3. How the success of the program is measured

(N=13)   means

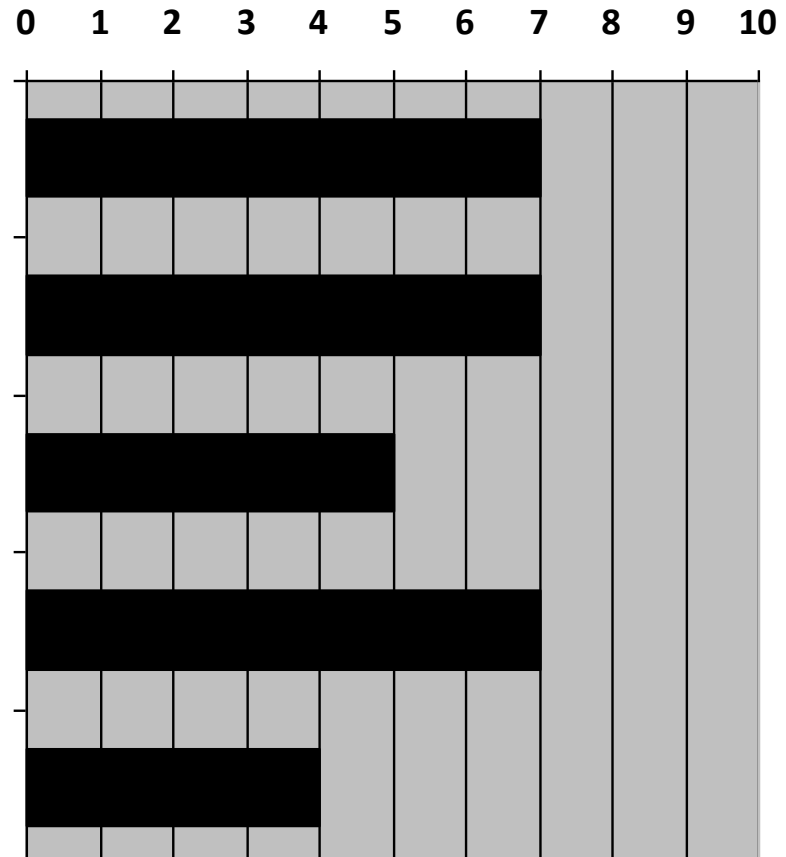|	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The percentage of students completing the program

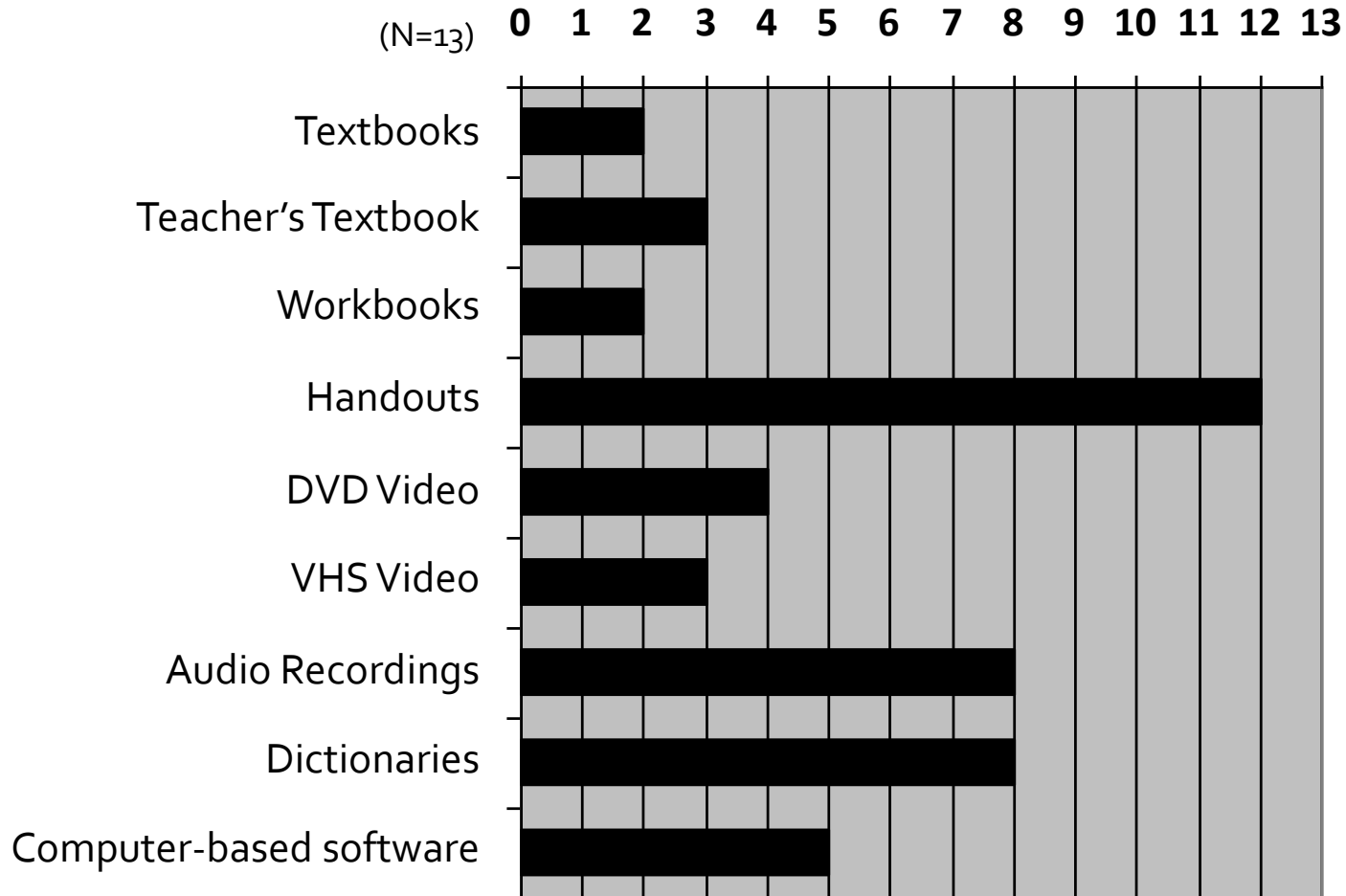Students are able to use the language outside of the classroom

Students have an academic understanding of the language

Students produce some materials (written, recorded, etc) in the language
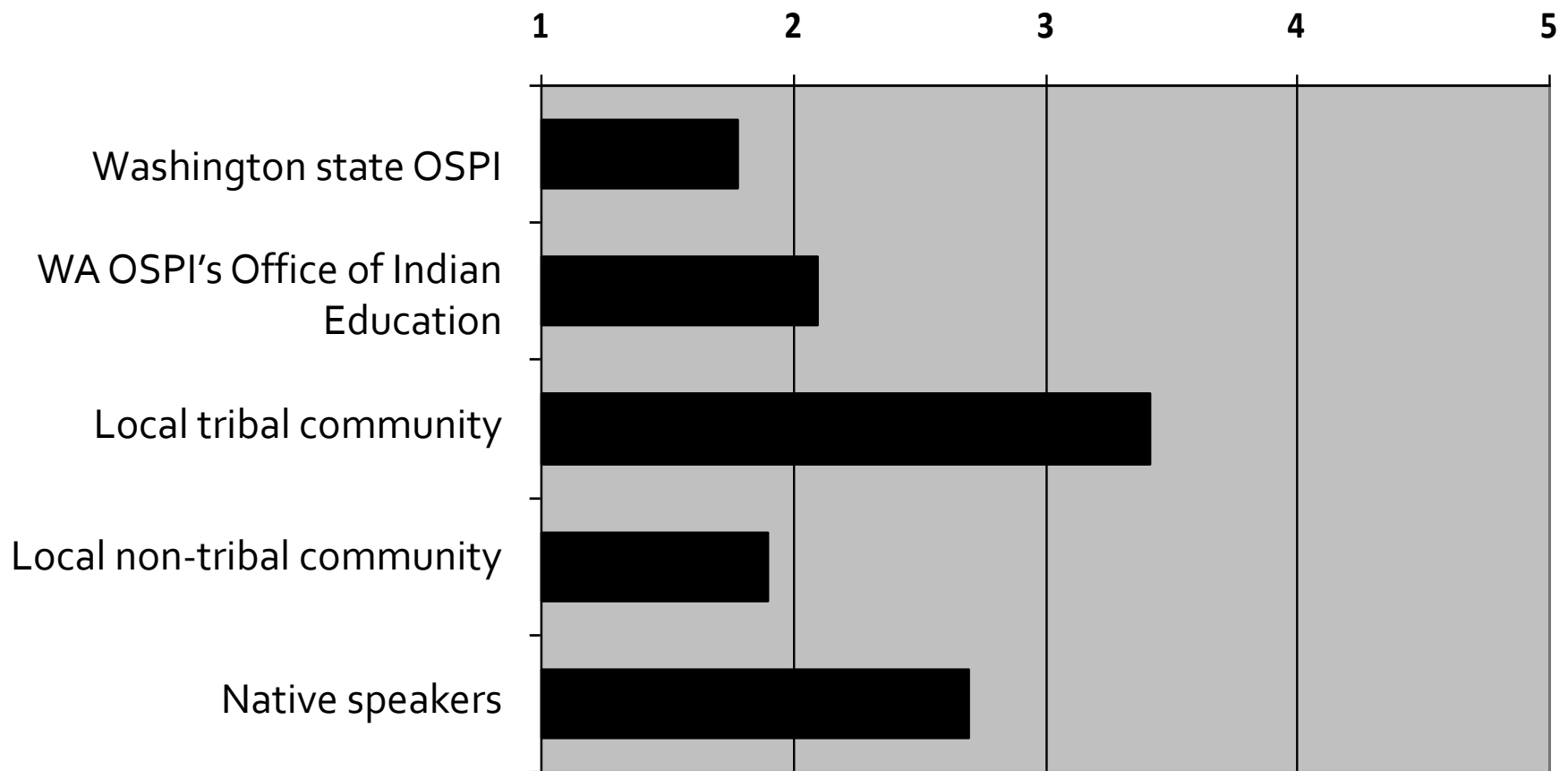
Other

3. Available Curriculum Materials

(N=13)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Textbooks			2											
Teacher's Textbook				3										
Workbooks			2											
Handouts													12	
DVD Video					4									
VHS Video				3										
Audio Recordings									8					
Dictionaries									8					
Computer-based software						5								

3. Other domains for language use

(N = 13)

	# of respondents aware of the opportunity
language-immersion	1
cultural events	10
speaking to community members, relatives	11
community center programs	2
after-school classes	2
church	2
home environment	1
don't know	3

3. Outside involvement/collaboration

(N = 13)

1 = not involved | 3 = moderately involved | 5 = completely involved

	1	2	3	4	5

Washington state OSPI

WA OSPI's Office of Indian Education

Local tribal community

Local non-tribal community

Native speakers

3. Outside involvement/collaboration

(N = 13)

1 = not helpful | 3 = somewhat helpful | 5 = exceedingly helpful
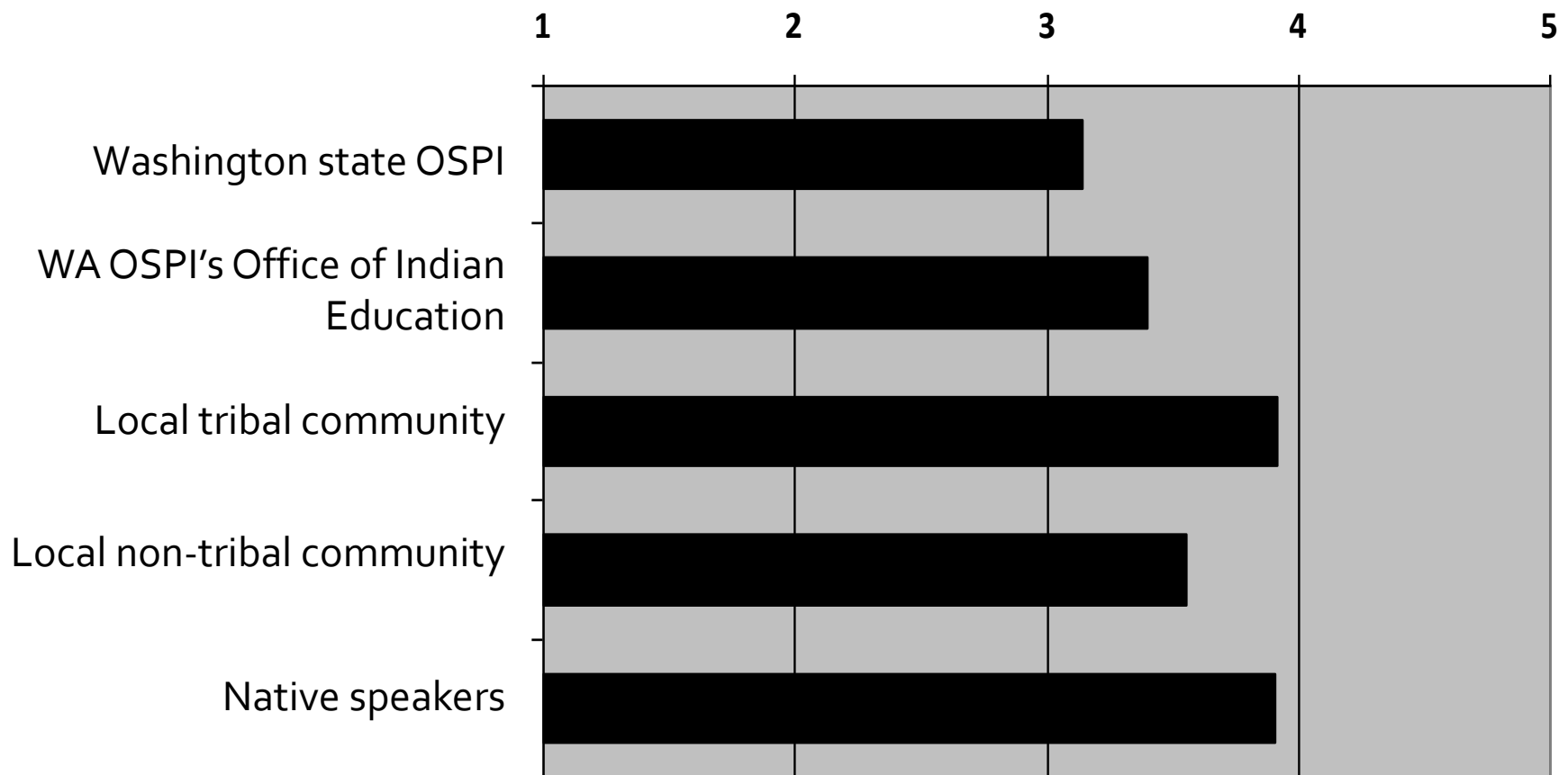
5.2. Native speakers
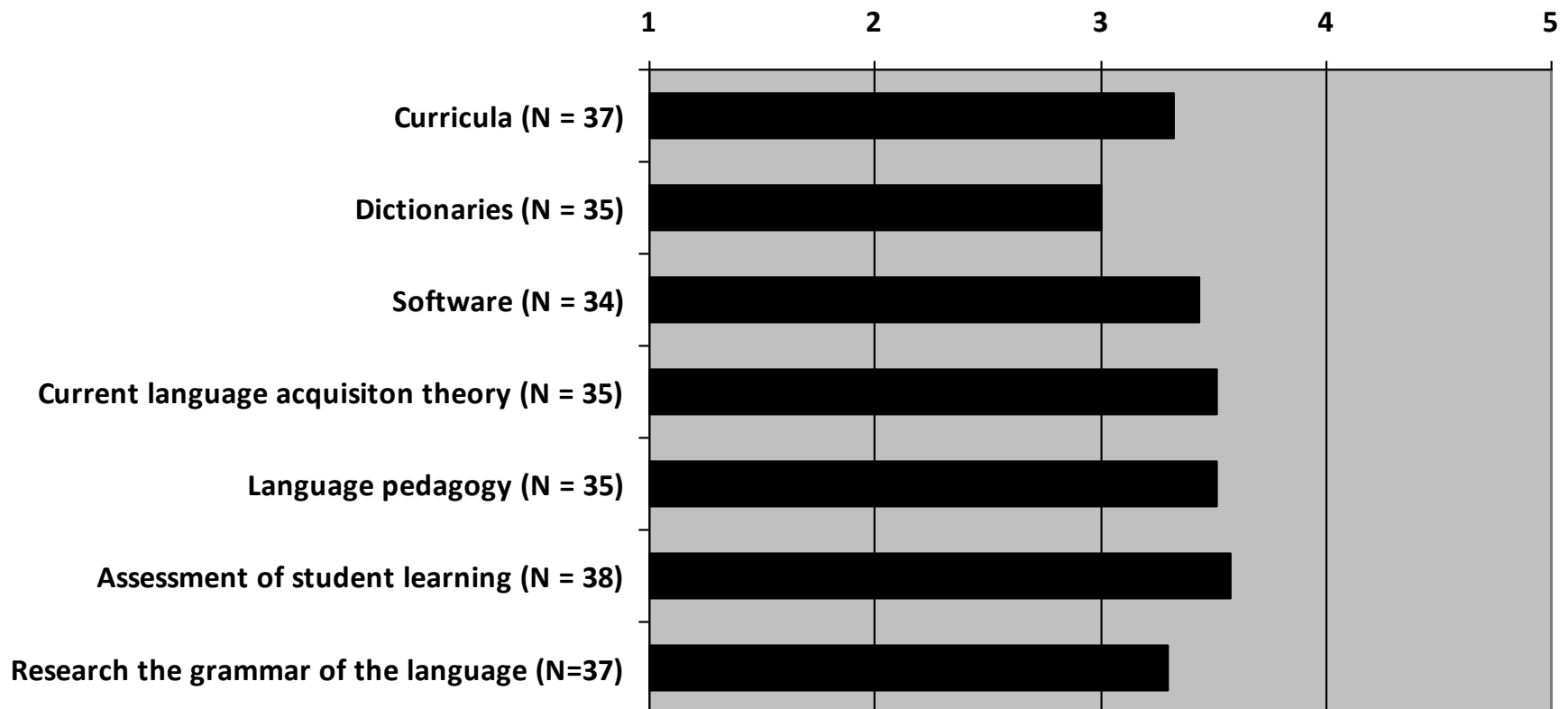
Level of involvement of native speakers in the classroom (N = 13)

don't know	not involved	somewhat involved	moderately involved	strongly involved	completely involved
2	2	6	1	0	2

Interest of educators in meeting with language specialists

1 = prefer to handle things internally | 2 = not very interested
*3 = might consider it / 4 = would be interested / 5 = strongly interested*

5.3. Program access

- Educators' perceptions of the attitudes by the general public regarding offering the language to non-indigenous students. (N = 9)

no opinions were voiced	2
they completely opposed it	1
they moderately opposed it	0
there was equal support and opposition	0
they moderately supported it	1
they completely supported it	4
don't know	1

5.2. Teacher training

- Percentages of teachers with a certain level of teacher training (N = 13)
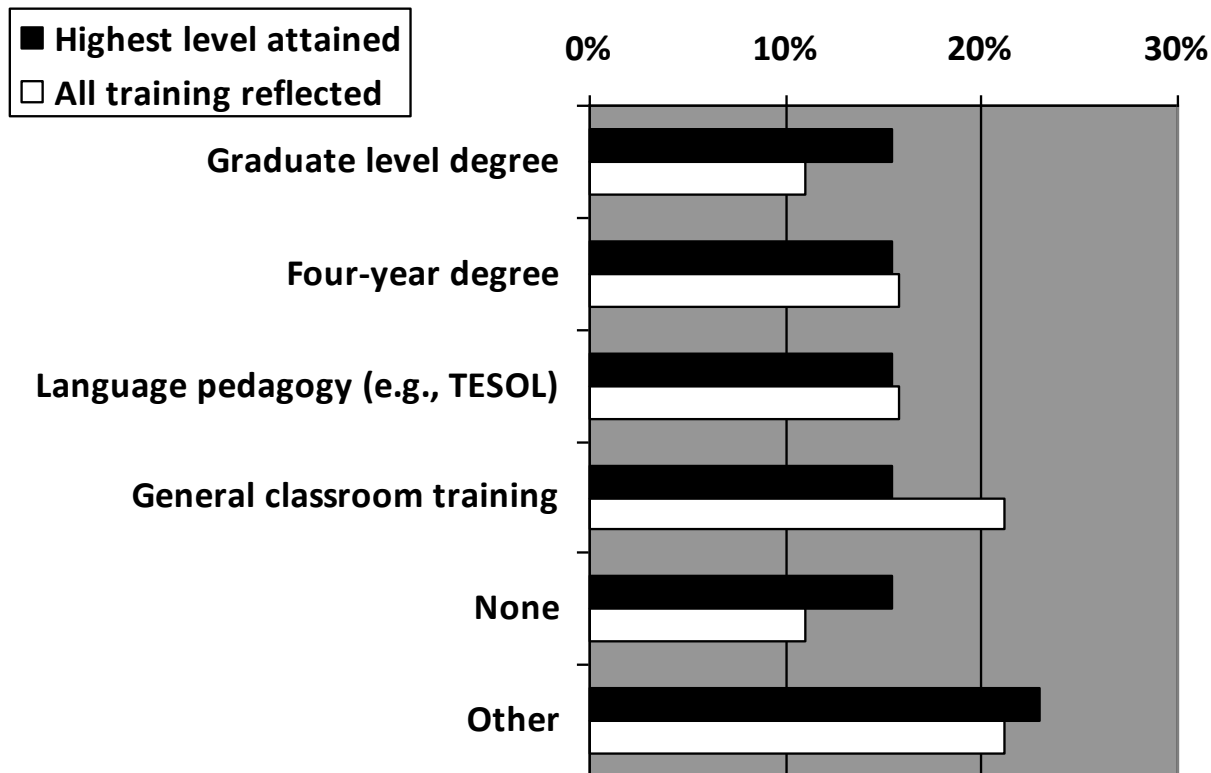
5.3. School or district plans to start a program (N = 25)

yes, we are investigating options	1
yes, but we have no immediate plans	2
yes, but we are not able to at this time	4
we had a program before, but it has since ended	3
no	13
don't know	2

- Map of reported Washington state public schools that offer an indigenous language program

★ Location of public schools that offered an indigenous language program in 2010

4. What is a typical program?

Kalispel men fishing from birch canoe on Cee Cee Ah Creek, Pend Oreille river, Washington, ca. 1908
http://content.lib.washington.edu/u?/loc,1017

- It allows both indigenous and non-indigenous students access , which the majority of respondents favored

- Teachers have a wide variety of training, from graduate degrees to only classroom experience

- It is generally offered at high schools or elementary schools rather than middle schools

- The primary method of assessment is oral and standardized assessment of any kind is uncommon

- Most respondents did not know how involved native speakers were in the classroom. The majority of those that did know said they were only somewhat involved

4. Why so few programs ?

- Indigenous language programs in Washington's K-12 public schools are **rare**

- Potential reasons why so few programs exist:
  - A lack of basic resources
  - No reliable funding sources
  - A lack of demand
  - Low (economic) status of the languages

- Educator attitudes are generally positive towards indigenous language education and local control
  - However, this does not appear to have much of an effect on whether a language program is offered

Puget Sound area woman and girls pick hops, White River Valley, Washington, 1902
http://content.lib.washington.edu/u?/loc,2114

5. Collaboration: Institutional support

- Formal efforts to equalize some policies with respect to more-commonly-taught languages or other less-commonly-taught languages and indigenous languages
  - Legislation (college language requirements)
  - Terminology
    - (e.g., "heritage mother tongue", "world language")
  - Traditional classroom setting

Landry, Rodrigue, Allard, Râeal, & Deveau, Kenneth (2007). Bilingual schooling of the Canadian Francophone minority: A cultural autonomy model. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 2007*(185), 133-162.

5. Collaboration: fluent speakers

- ## The lack of native and adequately fluent speakers to be instructors
  - Likely to continue to get worse
  - Need for school-external domains to help support the real-world use, fluency, and the status of the language
  - Higher education as a training source
    - Meta-linguistic information
    - Language acquisition and pedagogical theory

5. Collaboration: demand

- ## The lack of demand for new programs
  - ### Formal support
    - Legislation
    - Better networks with the OSPI
  - ### Higher education
    - Language requirements
    - Research
    - Local history and culture
    - Diversity
  - ### Local communities
  - ### Other communities (coalitions)
    - Promote the value of indigenous languages to the general public and policy makers

5. Collaboration: quality materials

- **The lack of quality materials**
  - Higher education
    - (Applied) Linguistics
      - Creation of meta-linguistic information (e.g., grammars)
      - Language documentation and authentic language examples
      - Why is there a lack of interest on behalf of the K-12 educators to collaborate?
    - Technical (e.g., software, design, etc)
    - Pedagogical
    - Anthropological
  - Non-profits and community members can participate in the creation of certain kinds of materials
    - (e.g., multimedia, design, manufacturing, etc.)
  - Build stronger network ties between programs for resource sharing

5. Impediments to collaboration?

- Distrust of and/or distancing from linguists and language pedagogy researchers.
  - There are legitimate historical reasons and present concerns why this distrust exists. Trust , respect and cooperation are goals for the future.

- Lack of communication
  - Tribe / State / Higher Education / K-12 / Researchers / larger communities

- Isolating technologies

5. Recent example of collaboration
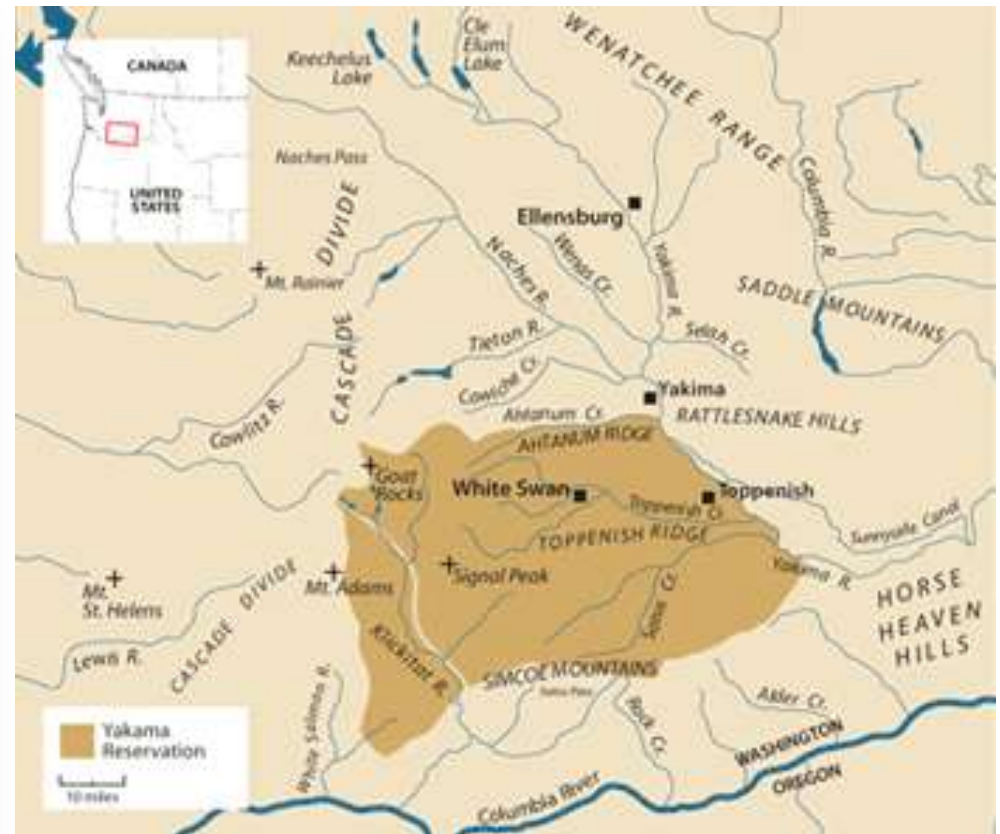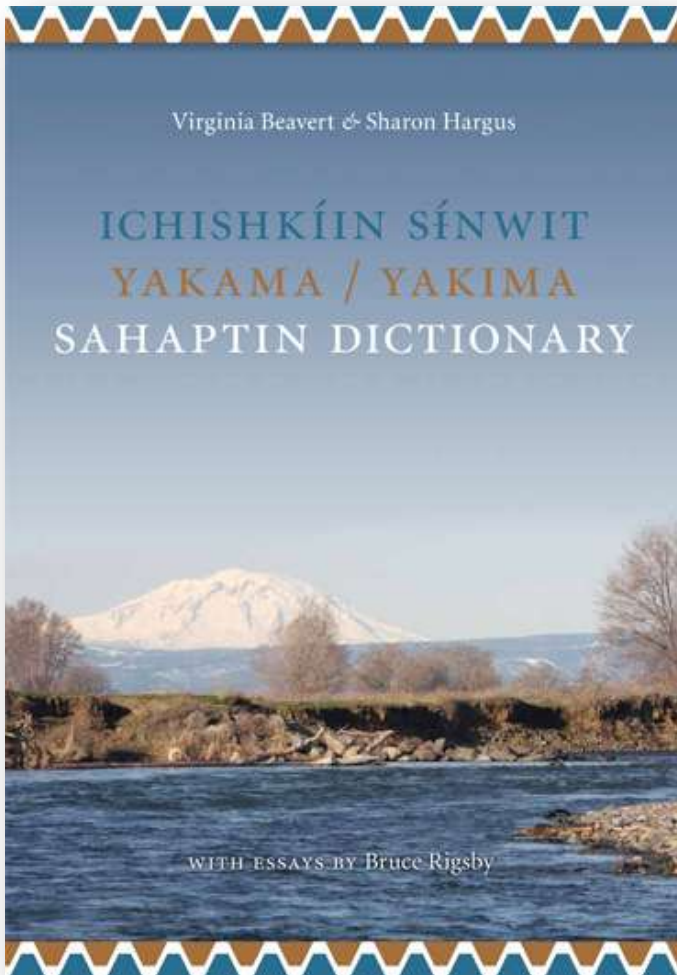
5. Technology & Collaboration

- Resource sharing and long term material extendibility
  - Consider utilizing technology that:
    - Can be easily shared/archived
    - Can be made secure
    - Can be converted to/archived as formats that are not proprietary and are predicted to be standards in the long run
      - (e.g., csv, txt, etc)
    - Is a pre-existing option with support systems (i.e., open-source options, and public academic IT services before creating something from scratch.)
      - (e.g., Moodle)

34

5. Technology and pedagogy

- Is the technology pedagogically sound?

- What are the expected outcomes of the technology?

- Could the resource be implemented in another way to be maximally accessible?

Summary of recommendations to strengthen language programs through collaboration

1 - Build stronger ties between local groups and higher education

- Documentation and the development of meta-linguistic information
  - (e.g., lexicons, grammars)
- More research on the programs and situation
- A stronger presence of the languages on local campuses, preferably as language programs
- Material and pedagogical support for the programs

2 - Communicate legislative efforts with higher education as well as local communities

- Involve the local communities
- Emphasize local control

6. Summary of Recommendations (2)

3 - Increase ties and interaction between public K-12 education and other local language educational efforts, especially community (& tribal) organizations

4 - Build stronger networks among other language programs outside of the community

- Share successes
- Share resources
- Create a larger group influence, culturally and politically

5 - Promote the value of indigenous languages to the non-tribal community

- (i.e., increase the status)

6 - Increase awareness and demand for language programs in the local communities

Thank you for listening

- Thanks also go to all of the respondents, Michele Anciaux Aoki, Denny Hurtado, Sharon Hargus, Betsy Evans, Tanya Matthews, Karma Hugo, Cathy Seymour, Galen Basse, John Lyon, Hyunjung Ahn and the UW Socio Brownbag group.

Spokane man named Jim Elisha and a horse, Spokane, Washington, 1925
http://content.lib.washington.edu/u?/loc,1018

Additional References:

Pascua, Maria (2010). Makah language education program at Neah Bay High School. Seattle: UW WAFTL Conference.
Underriner, Janne (2010). Honoring taqʷseblu's Vision and Mission. Seattle: 1st Annual Lushootseed Research Conference.